

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 1 and 10 are requested to be cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer in order to permit allowable subject matter to issue without further delay.

Claims 2-7, 11-13, and 15-16 are currently being amended.

Claim 17 is being added. Support for new claim 17 can be found in the specification as originally filed, *inter alia*, on page 3, lines 35-36.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application is presented with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 2-9 and 11-17 are now pending and under examination in this application.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge, with appreciation, the PTO's indication, on page 5 of the Office Action, that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have amended claim 12 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 1 from which claim 12 directly depended. Additionally, claims 2-7, 11-13, and 15-16 were amended to depend from allowable claim 12. As such, claims 2-9 and 11-16 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

On page 2 of the Office Action, the PTO has rejected claims 1-3 and 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,558,186 to LePottier *et al.*

While Applicants do not acquiesce in this §102 rejection, in the interest of permitting allowable subject matter to issue without further delay, Applicants have cancelled claims 1 and 10 without prejudice and disclaimer. Applicants have rewritten claim 12 in independent form, and amended the remaining claims to depend directly or indirectly from allowable claim 12, thereby rendering the rejection of dependent claims 2-3, and 7-9 moot.

Newly Added Claims

Applicants have added new claim 17 in this response. New claim 17 is dependent on claim 2 which is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, new claim 17 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

By  _____

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